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SUBJECT : Efforts of Mufti and Transjordan to Gain Influence Within Liberation Army.

1. The following is quoted from the Jewish Agency's Internal Report on Arab Information (Palestine) No. 13/48, 28 March 1948.

"The 'Liberation Army' chiefs are strengthening their ties with the opposition elements, which are traditionally predominant in the Samarian triangle. Consequently the political influence of Fawzi QAWUKJI and his principal officers seems to be growing. Fawzi now appears to enjoy the combined support of Trans-Jordan, Syria and opposition elements in Palestine. On the otherhand the MUFTI continues to display a tendency to compromise in the assurance that his position is unassailable, and he seems to be making a bid to win over Fawzi's adherents. An illustration of this is provided by the appointment of a successor to the Arab commander in Haifa, who was killed on 17 March. He did not object to this post being offered to MUHAMMAD Bay, the commander of the Tulkarm district, or to an Arab Legion officer (the former commander had also belonged to the Arab Legion). He also offered no objections when the Haifa Arabs wished to approach Muhammad SAFA, of the Janin district, to nominate a commander for the city. In this connection it has been rumored in Jerusalem that Mahmud al-HINDI is to be appointed commander of the Jerusalem district and that Abd-al-Qadir HUSAYNI is trying to win him over.

"There are a number of indications that ties between the MUFTI's fighting men and the 'Liberation Army' are none too firm. It is reported, for instance, that Abd-al-Qadir HUSAYNI, Hassan SALAMAH and Abu IBRAHIM (the last named is in the Nazareth area) are getting their supplies through Haj Khalid al-ARAB, who moves between Damascus and Beirut and acts as a kind of quartermaster-general for the MUFTI. The MUFTI's men are also trying to create faits accomplis in order to strengthen their position in certain areas. In Jaffa, Hassan SALA has been trying to occupy several army camps and airfields. He got hold of the camp at Ras al-Ayn, which afterwards passed into the control of the Iraqis. He also attempted to gain control of the 'Aqir airfield. His men are holding the camp at Bir Salim, near Ramleh. An attempt to occupy another camp near Ras al-Ayn failed because SALAMAH did not have the sum of LP 10,000 which the British officer in charge demanded. Abd-al-Qadir HUSAYNI's attempt to take possession of the Halhul camp, in the Hebron area, also failed; the Arab Legion has turned up in that district and evidently means to seize control there.

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"The last-mentioned fact tends to show that the spheres of influence in the Hebron area and the south have not yet been finally delimited. Apparently the Arab Legion wants to take over the Hebron area and possibly the Jaffa area as well. It is known that Dr. HAYKAL, Mayor of Jaffa, has asked the central authorities to send the Arab Legion to Jaffa in order to ensure security inside the city. The District Commissioner, however, opposed this step. The Trans-Jordan Government is also trying to strengthen its influence in the Bayssan district. The Bayssan District Officer has discussed with Tawfiq Abu-al-Quds, Trans-Jordan Premier, ways and means of securing cooperation between himself and the Governor of Irbid, the adjoining district of Trans-Jordan."

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